ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2015 Chesapeake Bay-Watershed Education and Training (B-WET)Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-NCBO-2015-2004234

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.457, Chesapeake Bay Studies

Dates: The deadline for applications is 11:59 PM Eastern Time on January 14, 2015 when submitting through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). PLEASE NOTE: for applicants that submit through Grants.gov, it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission, hard copy applications will be accepted. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery, but must be received (not postmarked) by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on January 14, 2015.

Informational webinars about the FY 2015 B-WET Chesapeake funding announcement will be held on November 5, 2014 at 10:00 AM Eastern Time and November 10, 2014 at 2:00 PM Eastern Time. To register for these webinars, please visit http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet/b-wet-grant-workshops

Funding Opportunity Description: B-WET Chesapeake is a competitive grant program that supports existing, high-quality environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new, innovative programs, and encourages capacity building and partnership development for environmental education programs throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. Successful projects advance the environmental literacy goal of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and goals of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan by providing hands-on environmental education about issues affecting the Chesapeake Bay watershed for students and related professional

development for teachers, administrators, and other educators who serve formal K-12 audiences. These Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) integrate field experiences with classroom activities and instruction in NOAA-related science content.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) environment. B-WET was established in 2002 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and currently exists in seven regions: Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, New England, California, Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, and Great Lakes.

The goal of this funding opportunity is to support K-12 environmental education programs that provide students with meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEEs) related to the Chesapeake Bay and related professional development for in-service teachers, administrators, or other educators serving K-12 students. The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are an excellent resource for environmental education. Its tidal and non-tidal waters and the surrounding landscape provide hands-on, place-based laboratories where students can see, touch, and learn about the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the greater environment.

Successful B-WET projects provide formal education that supports the Environmental Literacy goal of the Chesapeake Bay Program Agreement (http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page) and NOAA's Education Strategic Plan (http://www.education.noaa.gov/plan/09_NOAA_Educ_Strategic_Plan_Color.pdf)

Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET Program, have been shown to increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), thus contributing to NOAA's goals under the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (Pub. L. No. 111-358, 2011).

B-WET Chesapeake recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Environmentally literate

individuals can become effective future workers, problem solvers, and thoughtful community leaders and participants.

DEFINING THE MEANINGFUL WATERSHED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE (MWEE)

MWEEs are the cornerstones of student environmental education about and in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. MWEEs seek to seamlessly connect standards-based classroom learning with outdoor field investigations to create a deeper understanding of the natural environment. Specifically, MWEEs ask students to explore local environmental issues through sustained, teacher supported programming that includes, but is not limited to, issue definition, outdoor field experiences, action projects, and sharing student-developed synthesis and conclusions with the school and community.

Beginning with the primary grades, the jurisdictions' academic learning standards in the social and natural sciences call for inquiry, investigation, and active learning that increase in complexity and abstraction throughout the elementary, middle, and high school programs. Likewise, MWEEs should reflect this progression. The Chesapeake Bay Program uses the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Excellence in Environmental Education: Guidelines for Learning (K-12) to define the level of skill or knowledge appropriate for different grade levels of students.

Based on environmental education research, there are several core components of MWEEs and a series of best practices for program development that should contribute to student stewardship. Providers of MWEEs should include these "essential" elements and practices in their programs regardless of the project theme, grade level, or geographic location.

Essential Elements of Student MWEEs:

MWEEs should be learner-centered and focused on questions, problems, and issues to be investigated through collecting, analyzing and sharing data; learning protocols; exploring models; and examining natural phenomena. Teachers play an important role in presenting unbiased information and assisting students in their research and exploration. MWEEs should encourage observation, foster critical thinking, develop problem-solving skills, and instill confidence in students. Where appropriate, technology such as tablets, probeware, and

GPS equipment may be integrated throughout the instructional process. MWEEs may be multi-disciplinary as environmental issues often involve an interaction between natural systems (e.g. wildlife, plants, and water cycle) and social systems (e.g. communities, transportation systems, and schools). MWEEs consist of multiple components as defined below and each component should include time for reflection, allowing students to refocus on the question, problem, or issue.

Student MWEEs should include:

1) Issue Definition: Students focus on an environmental question, problem, or issue requiring background research and investigation. They learn more about the issue through classroom instruction, the collection of data, conducting experiments and by talking to experts and reviewing credible publications. They also reflect on their personal experiences and values related to the issue. This process should be age appropriate with practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades, starting with educator guided investigation and progressing to student-led inquiry. As students mature, the level and complexity of inquiry will likewise progress.

2) Outdoor field experiences: Students participate in one or more outdoor field experience sufficient to collect the data required for answering the research questions and informing student actions. The outdoor field experiences should be student-led to the extent possible with students actively involved in planning the investigation, taking measurements, or constructing the project within appropriate safety guidelines. These experiences can take place off-site and on the school grounds.

3) Action projects: Students participate in an action project during which students take action to address environmental issues at the personal or societal level. These projects provide students with a better understanding of the actions that they can take to protect and conserve natural resources, and allow them to have a sense of control over the outcome of environmental issues. The action projects can take the form of on-the-ground restoration projects on school grounds or in their community, or can be focused on increasing student civic engagement.

4) Synthesis and conclusions: Students analyze and evaluate the results of their investigation of the issue. Students make conclusions based on research, experiences, and data analysis and consider alternate hypotheses. Students should synthesize and communicate results and conclusions to an external audience such as other classrooms, schools, parents, or the community. This allows students to become agents behind their own actions and decisions.

Essential Practices to Support MWEEs:

State departments of education and local education agencies play an important role in establishing expectations and guidelines for the development and implementation of MWEEs. At the state level, plans that include strategies for MWEE implementation coupled with outreach and training opportunities for teachers and administrators have been effective in establishing and supporting a network for environmental literacy. At the local education agency level, the MWEE should be part of the local curriculum and fully aligned with the academic standards. The Chesapeake Bay Agreement calls for comprehensive MWEEs to occur at least once during each level of instruction (elementary, middle, and high school); however, as part of a comprehensive approach to environmental literacy the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup recommends that less intensive outdoor field investigations occur more frequently—each year when possible. To minimize cost, annual investigations can occur on school grounds or adjacent lands and waters. As stated above, the MWEE can be part of a larger strategy to address priorities such as service learning and STEM, as well as to meet multi-disciplinary standards.

Environmental education organizations, natural resource agencies, universities, businesses, and other organizations also have a wealth of applicable products and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts that can complement the classroom teacher's strengths and heighten the impact of environmental instruction both in the classroom and in the field. Environmental education professionals can assist schools and local education agencies with all aspects of MWEE implementation, including teacher professional development, student MWEEs, and environmental action projects. Additionally, environmental professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and stewardship actions.

With these guidelines and resources in mind, student MWEEs programs should be designed with:

1) Active Teacher Support: MWEEs should be connected to what is occurring in the formal classroom; therefore, classroom teachers should lead or actively support all phases of the MWEE for their students, including topic definition, field experiences, action projects, and synthesizing the information. MWEEs can be enhanced and supported by partners, such as environmental educators and natural resource professionals, but teachers have the sustained contact with students throughout the school year that positions them to better support research, answer questions, and evaluate student learning. Teachers can also serve as environmental role models. In order to support MWEEs, teachers should have appropriate knowledge of environmental issues, skill in scientific inquiry, and competency in environmental education pedagogy, including the ability and confidence to teach outdoor lessons and to lead students in critical thinking about environmental issues. In order to gain and maintain these competencies, teachers need access to sustained, high quality

professional development in the field of environmental education that includes ongoing support and feedback.

2) Classroom Integration: MWEEs should be fully integrated into what is occurring concurrently in the classroom, and should occur where and when they fit into the instructional sequence. MWEEs can be rich, multi-disciplinary units that have a unique opportunity to make strong connections among subject areas and reflect an integrated approach to learning. They can provide authentic, engaging content to address academic standards as well as statewide initiatives in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and Service Learning. Specifically, elements of science and social studies standards related to questioning, analysis and interpretation, knowledge of environmental processes and systems, skill for understanding and addressing environmental issues, and personal and civic responsibility align well with the MWEE.

3) Local Context: The local community should be viewed as a primary resource for student MWEEs. Place-based education promotes learning that is rooted in the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a students′ schoolyard, neighborhood, town or community, and thus offering students and teachers the opportunity to explore how individual and collective decisions impact their immediate surroundings. There are a variety of places in a community that can provide an engaging setting for outdoor learning, including the Chesapeake Bay, a stream near a school, a school building and its grounds, local parks or undeveloped areas, and even developed areas such as parking lots, ball fields, and marinas. Once a firm connection to their local environment is made, students are better positioned to expand their thinking to recognize the far-reaching implications of individual and societal decisions to the larger national and global environment.

4) Sustained Activity: MWEEs should be a sustained activity that stimulates and motivates the student from beginning to end. Though a field experience itself may occur as a specific event occurring in one day, the total duration leading up to and following the experience should involve a significant investment of instructional time. Rich learning experiences, especially those involving monitoring, research, and action projects, may require time increments spread over weeks or even months. Experiences such as tours, gallery visits, simulations, demonstrations, or "nature walks" may be instructionally useful, but alone do not constitute an MWEE.

Information on the B-WET Chesapeake program, including examples of education partnerships that have been funded to date, can be found at http://www.chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/funding/previously-funded-awards. Potential applicants may contact the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (contact information in Section VII) before submitting an application with questions about applicability of partnership ideas to B-WET goals and objectives.

The definition of the MWEE included in this funding announcement mirrors a draft updated MWEE definition which is currently being finalized by the leadership team of the Chesapeake Bay Program's education workgroup (http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/education_workgroup).

B. Program Priorities

All B-WET projects support the delivery the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE). However, there are different approaches to achieving this. The following "Priority Areas" describe the project types and topics that B-WET Chesapeake is supporting in FY15.

Proposals must address one of these three priorities areas: 1. Systemic MWEE Implementation, 2. MWEE Capacity Building. 3. Emerging Projects. A fourth program priority is to support the continuation of existing multi-year projects as described below. A portion of FY15 funds will be devoted to these existing awards. Organizations implementing these projects should not apply under this announcement.

Please specify which of the three priority areas you are addressing in the application.

1. Systemic MWEE Implementation

Systemic MWEE programs strive to reach the entire student and teacher population in one or more grades in an entire school system or recognized sub-unit of a school system.

Systemic programs do not target one school (unless it is the only school at that level in a school system) or a sub-set of schools from multiple school systems. A system can be a division, region, county, city, or even state. Applications for systemic programs can come from any applicant type, not just school divisions and departments of education. Programs that are systemic encourage ownership from a broad range of constituents and promote long term sustainability of the MWEE program in a school division.

Systemic programs require substantial involvement of the school system that can come in the form of mandating MWEEs, schoolyard habitats, or other relevant topics in the curriculum; providing funding for teacher substitutes, resource teachers, equipment, or buses; mandating MWEE professional development; and more. School systems creating partnerships with multiple environmental education providers may be necessary to ensure all

students receive outdoor learning experiences. High-level system support from superintendents, school boards, and principals is reflective of a successful systemic program.

Under Systemic MWEE Implementation, teacher professional development should be combined with long term K-12 classroom-integrated MWEEs

for the students of these trained teachers. Professional development opportunities must be at least three days (24 cumulative hours) in duration-either consecutively or over the course of a school year, deliver training on both content and instruction in the outdoors, include year-long support for teachers, and include a plan for how the teachers will be involved in implementing watershed education with their students. This kind of in-depth professional development reinforces a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources. Students should receive multiple outdoor experiences that are fully supported in the classroom by their teachers to ensure that the concepts of watershed education are reinforced throughout the school year. Outdoor experiences can occur on or near school grounds.

2. MWEE Capacity Building

MWEEs are rigorous pedagogical experiences with multiple elements delivered over the course of days, weeks, or even months. They typically involve partners external to the formal school division and require significant involvement from teachers. As such, there are ample opportunities for projects that build the capacity of agencies and organizations to develop, deliver, and sustain projects that advance the MWEE at the state or regional level. Capacity building proposals can focus on one state or multiple states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Capacity building may include piloting innovative training for pre-service, in service or non-formal educators; developing curriculum/resource guides, websites, or workshops where there is a demonstrated gap in content or resources; or establishing, developing, or implementing a state environmental literacy plan or sustainable school program that includes MWEEs. Capacity building requires networking among educational organizations and to the extent possible should aim to coordinate and/or link major education or natural resource agencies and organizations throughout a state or region.

Capacity building is a complex, long-term effort that can take years to successfully design and implement. Therefore, all capacity building proposals must indicate how the project identified in the proposal is part of a larger state or regional effort. Please include documented support from a state or regional organization that specifies how this project meets state or regional needs. Examples of these organizations include but are not limited to

governmental entities such as state departments of education or natural resource agencies, or non-profit organizations like state NAAEE affiliate groups or science teachers associations. Professional development occurring under capacity building applications must meet the same rigor as professional development in systemic projects (see "Systemic MWEE Implementation" for requirements).

3. Emerging Projects

B-WET Chesapeake recognizes there are many organizations across the watershed that strive to implement high quality MWEE programming, yet face significant challenges in meeting the rigor of Systemic MWEE Implementation and MWEE Capacity Building projects. While every organization faces some barriers to project implementation, some have greater challenges due to lack of local resources or partners, policies of schools divisions, or limited internal capacity. In order to cultivate projects and partners not traditionally served by B-WET, NOAA is encouraging new applicants, or those who have not received B-WET funding in the last five fiscal years (FY 2010 to FY 2014), to apply as Emerging Projects. Projects must still deliver MWEEs as defined in this announcement, and could include a focus on teacher professional development, student programming, or a combination of both. While these projects do not need to be systemic as defined here, projects should still meet state and local learning standards, fully integrate into what is occurring in the formal classroom, and include active teacher support. Documentation of interest/support from a school division is requested in Emerging Projects.

Note, while we welcome applications from previous B-WET grantees under this priority area, the specific project being proposed must not have been previously funded by the Chesapeake B-WET. Please contact the B-WET Chesapeake coordinator if you have questions about what constitutes an emerging project.

4. Continuing Existing Projects

B-WET Chesapeake has existing grants that were identified as multi-year projects in previous application processes that will be supported with FY15 funds. These existing grantees with continuing projects do not need to submit an application under this announcement. Subject to the availability of funds, renewals of these awards will be issued to continue these multi-year projects under this announcement pending adequate and timely submission of project performance reports and documentation of adequate progress towards stated objectives. Therefore, funding for new proposals will be limited due to funding of

continuing projects. We anticipate the majority of FY 2015 funding going to support continuing projects.

NOAA SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

Any proposal to this announcement must meet one of the three priority areas described in the previous section. NOAA has additional special interest areas that applicants may wish to address if they choose, which are: I. Geographic Literacy, II. NOAA's Choptank Complex Habitat Focus Area, and III. GLOBE Program. More information on each special interest area is provided below. While applicants are not required to address a NOAA special interest area, projects that do so are particularly encouraged because they specifically capitalize on a NOAA supported educational program, restoration project, or national education interests.

I. Geographic Literacy

MWEEs are investigative, encourage systems thinking and human/environmental connections, concepts common to geography. MWEEs can also include social, economic, historical, and archaeological questions, problems, and issues that are directly related to Bay peoples and cultures. Where appropriate, applicants addressing any of the above priorities are encouraged to use fundamental themes of geographic literacy to engage students and teachers about the Chesapeake and their local watershed. Projects may emphasize the importance of place and connections to a regional, national, and global community. This should ultimately prepare students to be citizens who can weigh impacts of decisions on both the watershed and global community. Interactions between human and natural environments should be explored to examine how human systems depend on and modify the watershed's natural systems.

The collecting, mapping, and sharing of environmental data (water quality, land use, etc) using web-based tools and geospatial technologies, such as Chesapeake Bay FieldScope (http://chesapeake.fieldscope.org/v3), are strongly encouraged to reinforce concepts of place, location, and movement. For more information about Geographic Literacy, please visit the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office's Environmental and Geographic Literacy page: http://www.chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet/defining-environmental-and-geographic-literacy

II. NOAA's Choptank Complex Habitat Focus Area

NOAA recently designated several geographic areas around the country as "Habitat Focus Areas" to prioritize long-term habitat science and conservation. The site chosen within the Chesapeake Bay watershed is the Choptank River Complex. This includes the Choptank and Little Choptank Rivers located on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Choptank River, with headwaters in Delaware, is the longest river on the Delmarva Peninsula. This area is a treasured part of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, representing critical habitat for spawning striped bass and river herring, as well as historically abundant oyster reefs.

B-WET Chesapeake believes the success and sustainability of in-water restoration activities in the Habitat Focus Area can only be achieved with the cooperation and inclusion of local residents, including students and teachers. Therefore, we are seeking new projects specifically in this area in support of restoration activities of NOAA and many other government and non-governmental organizations. More about the Habitat Focus Area can be found at:

http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/habitats-hot-topics/choptank-complex-announced-as-habitat-focus-area.

III. Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) Program

GLOBE is a worldwide hands-on, primary and secondary school-based science and education program with a vision to promote and support students, teachers and scientists to collaborate on inquiry-based investigations involving the collection and/or analysis of data about the environment and the Earth system. The successful implementation of GLOBE relies on partnerships with organizations that undertake efforts to recruit schools, train teachers, and mentor those teachers and their students in their efforts to implement GLOBE and engage in GLOBE research activities. Projects can package GLOBE content to better suit MWEE programming and further engage the formal education community in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. For more information about the GLOBE Program, visit: www.globe.gov. Information on connecting to an existing GLOBE Partner or becoming a Partner is available at: www.globe.gov/community/partners

C. Program Authority

Under 33 U.S.C. § 893a(a), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by

the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Under this announcement, NOAA anticipates that approximately $2.7M may be available in FY 2015 to fund eligible applications, subject to the availability of appropriations. Of this amount, NOAA anticipates that $1.2M will go toward new awards, with the remaining $1.5M going to fund years two and three of continuing awards. For new awards, we anticipate $900,000 for MWEE Systemic Implementation projects and Emerging Projects and $300,000 for MWEE Capacity Building projects. Funding is anticipated to maintain awards for project periods of up to three years, but funding in subsequent years is subject to appropriations made available annually by Congress.

MWEE Capacity Building projects should not request over $75,000 annually. Systemic MWEE Implementation projects and Emerging Projects should not request over $150,000 annually.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. NOAA is not responsible for proposal preparation costs. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made (pre-award costs), they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when an award is made. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before July 1, 2015. Applications should cover a project period of between one and three years. Projects that request multi-year funding must include in their submission a full description of the activities and estimated budget by line item (e.g. personnel, equipment, supplies) for all proposed work for each year.

Multi-year project period requests may be funded incrementally on an annual basis, but once awarded, multi-year partnerships will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years.

NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding in subsequent years. A recommendation to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) to continue an award in subsequent years, or to extend the period of performance, is at the total discretion of the Selecting Official based on recommendations by the Federal Program Officer.

Single year requests or projects that NOAA chooses to fund for only one year will be required to re-compete in subsequent years. Any continuation of the project period will depend on the submission of a new proposal subject to review, adequate progress on previous award(s), and available funding.

Future opportunities for submitting proposals to the B-WET competitive process are anticipated, but will depend on funding levels and resources available to support new projects.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through a cooperative agreement under the terms of this notice. Applications funded through cooperative agreements will include substantial involvement of the Federal government, which may include, but is not limited to, liaison activities between the grantee and NOAA personnel who are contributing data or expertise to the project.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-through-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, community-based and nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, interstate agencies, and Indian tribal governments. For profit organizations, foreign institutions, foreign organizations, and foreign government agencies are not eligible to apply; however, for-profit and foreign organizations may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner. Likewise, Federal agencies are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this announcement, but may be project partners.

The Department of Commerce/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO) encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program, however, the NCBO strongly encourages applicants to share as much of the costs of the award as possible. Funds from other Federal awards may not be considered matching funds. The nature of the contribution (cash versus in-kind) and the amount of matching funds will be taken into consideration in the review process. Priority selection will be given to proposals that propose cash rather than in-kind contributions.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Systemic MWEE Implementation and Emerging Project applications with budgets in which the Federal share requested from NOAA is more than $150,000 annually will not be merit reviewed.

MWEE Capacity Building Project applications with budgets in which the Federal share requested from NOAA is more than $75,000 annually will not be merit reviewed.

Applications that are lacking any of the required elements of the application or do not follow the form prescribed in IV.B of this FFO will not be merit reviewed. Likewise, applications received after the deadline will not be merit reviewed. See additional details in Section IV. C of this FFO.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Electronic application packages are strongly encouraged and are available at: http://www.grants.gov/ (Grants.gov).

If the applicant has difficulty accessing Grants.gov or downloading the required forms from the NOAA website, they should contact Kevin Schabow , NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office; 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 207, Annapolis, MD 21403, or by phone at 410-295-3145, or fax to 410-267-5666, or via email at Kevin.schabow@noaa.gov. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office does not have a direct telephonic device for the deaf, however, TDD capabilities can be accessed through the State of Maryland-supplied TDD contact number, 800 735 2258, between the hours of 8 AM-4:30 PM.

Information on the B-WET Chesapeake program, including examples of currently supported projects, can be found on NOAA’s website at http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/funding/funded-awards. Potential applicants may contact the NCBO before submitting an application to discuss the applicability of project ideas to B-WET goals and objectives.

B. Content and Form of Application

The provisions for application preparation are mandatory. Proposals must be complete and follow the format described in this announcement. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the NCBO or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through Grants.gov. If applying by paper application, applicants are required to submit one copy of the full proposal with original signatures on all required forms.

1. Form

The page margin on standard letter-size paper must be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom, left, and right. All pages should be numbered. The typeface must be standard 11 point font size or larger and must be clear and easily legible. All narrative sections of the application should be single spaced and consist of the sections described in Section IV.B.2. of this FFO

The entire narrative portion of the Work Plan (which includes the one-page Project Summary, Project Description, Sustainability, Outreach and Education, and Project Evaluation) shall not exceed 13 pages. A one page Project Summary should be included followed by up to 12 pages total for the Project Description, Sustainability, Outreach and Education, and Project Evaluation. The Detailed Budget and Appendices (i.e., Budget Justification, Timeline, Logic Model, Technical Expertise and Qualifications, Partnership Commitment Letters, and Results from Prior NOAA Support) are not included in the page limit. Additional informational material should not be submitted.

2. Content

Required Elements for Applications:

a) At the time of application submission, all applicants anticipating direct funding shall submit the following forms with signatures of the authorized representative of the submitting institution. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms.):

* Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424

* Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A

* Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: Form SF-424B

* Certifications Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511

* Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable, see instructions on form)

(i) Project Summary (1 page):

* Project Title

* Priority Area(s): Systemic MWEE Implementation, Capacity Building, and Emerging Projects

* Project duration: 12 to 36 month project period starting on the first of the month and ending on the last day of the month.

* Organization and Partnerships: Briefly describe your organization and list your key partners for this grant, if applicable. Partnerships are encouraged.

* Summary: Provide a brief statement that explains the need for your project and its goals and objectives. In addition, identify what NOAA priority you will address and/or NOAA assets you will use. Your summary should use layman's terms to provide reviewers with an understanding of the purpose and expected outcomes of your educational project. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read this paragraph and grasp your plan. More information about NOAA assets and educational resources can be found at: http://www.education.noaa.gov/ .

* Delivery Method: Explain how you will reach your audience, such as workshops, field experiences, interactive programs, summer institutes, classroom outreach, etc.

* Audience: Describe the demographics of your target audience including the school division(s) and the number and types of participants you expect to reach, such as teachers and students and the specific grade levels, environmental educators, principals, etc.

* Budget Information: Total Federal funding requested this fiscal year; Total Non Federal match for this fiscal year. Total multi-year request and match (if applicable). Please list requested amounts in whole dollars.

(ii) Project Description (up to 12 pages): Describe in detail what your project will achieve with the following headings: What, Why, Who, and How. Explain each aspect of your proposal clearly and address each topic below. Please address all of the following to ensure that grant reviewers can fully comprehend and score your project correctly. Specific Evaluation Criteria is defined in Section V.A.

* What: Explain the goals and objectives for your project. Include information about how the project contributes to greater understanding and stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, identify the NOAA B-WET program priority and NOAA special interest area, if applicable, your project supports, and discuss how it supports the Environmental Literacy goal of the Chesapeake Bay Program and NOAA Education Strategic Plan. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.1 (Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals).

* Why: Describe the need for your project, including a description of any state, regional, or national initiatives that the project supports. Cite timely studies or sources, where appropriate, that verify the need for your project. This section will be scored using

evaluation criterion V.A.1 (Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals).

* Who: Identify the target audience, and give a precise location of the project and area(s) to be served. Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience, including anything that makes your target audience unique, and alignment with state standards. Be sure to include how many students and/or teachers are involved in your project. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.1 (Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals).

* How: Outline your objectives and a plan of action of how the proposed objectives will be accomplished. If multi-year, provide deliverables for each year. Detail how the project meets or supports the definition of the meaningful watershed educational experience as defined in this funding opportunity and what NOAA products, services, or staff will be used in program delivery. This section addresses technical merit of the proposal. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical merit).

(iii) Sustainability: Discuss a plan for sustainability of project beyond NOAA funding.

Explain why other funding sources, including school and/or school division, cannot fund all of the proposed work. List all other sources of funding that have been sought for the project and the status of those requests. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.4 (Project Costs).

(iv) Outreach and Education: Projects should include significant external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages students and/or teachers to share their knowledge with peers, their school, and their local community. This can include presentation of project design and evaluation at conferences or media outreach about the program, but should also include sharing with other students, teachers, administrators, and the community that advances the goal of environmental stewardship. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.5 (Outreach and Education).

(v) Project Evaluation: Evaluation here is defined as the systematic collection and documentation of information about your project's outcomes in order to improve the project's effectiveness, guide judgments about its impact, and/or inform decisions about future programming or funding. In this section, you must explain your plans for meeting the goals and objectives of your project and for tracking and measuring progress on your outputs and your short-term outcomes. If your medium- and long-term outcomes can also be measured

within the project period, explain your plans for that evaluation as well. Evaluation plans may be quantitative and/or qualitative and may include, for example, evaluation tools, observation, or outside consultation. No more than 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

If funded by NOAA, grant recipients must be willing to report evaluation results to NOAA. For detailed information on how to create an evaluation plan visit NOAA's website at

http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/b-wet-evaluation.html.

Participation in B-WET National Evaluation

In addition to project evaluation, grantees may be asked to participate in data collection for the national B-WET evaluation. B-WET has created a cross-region, internal evaluation system to monitor program implementation and outcomes on an ongoing basis. Results of this evaluation will be used to make adjustments to B-WET Federal Funding Opportunities (FFOs) and activities in order to improve the program.

As part of this evaluation system, recipients of B-WET grants and teacher-participants in grantees' professional development programs may be asked to voluntarily complete online questionnaires to provide evaluation data. One individual from each grantee organization will be asked to complete a questionnaire once per year of the award. For projects that work with teachers, the teacher-participants will be asked (using email addresses provided by the grantee organization) to complete one questionnaire at the close of their professional development and one after implementing Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) with their students. Grantees and teachers should be able to complete their questionnaire within 30-60 minutes. B-WET grantees and teachers who respond to the questionnaires will remain anonymous to B-WET and NOAA.

After receipt of an award, grantees may be asked to provide more information about how they plan to support this national evaluation effort, incorporate it into the project timeline, and ensure responses from participating teachers.

This data collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines (OMB Control No 0648-0658).

(b) APPENDICES (not included in 13-page limit):

(i) Budget Justification: Provide a detailed spreadsheet with narrative to support the requested items or activities (personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, and indirect costs). If applying for multiple years of funding, the budget should be broken down for each year requested. Applicants are encouraged to use the B WET budget template found at http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet/applying-for-a-grant. The budget justification submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on the required Forms SF- 424 and SF-424A. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.4 (Project Costs).

Applicants requesting indirect costs should provide a current approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or an acknowledgement letter from the cognizant agency to which the applicant has submitted a proposed rate.

For Maryland applicants: Specify how much funding has been requested from the

Chesapeake Bay Trust Environmental Education Grants Program to support the project, if such funding has been requested.

For multi-year projects: Ensure that there is a detailed budget narrative detailing the budget requested for each year matching each Form SF-424A.

(ii) Timeline: Include a project schedule that indicates when each action, event, milestone, product development, and evaluation will occur. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

(iii) Logic Model: Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific outputs and outcomes. Provide a logic model that displays these expected outputs and outcomes. A basic logic model template and instructions are available at http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/b-wet-evaluation.html. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

(iv) Technical Experience and Qualifications: Attach a description of your programmatic capabilities and ability to successfully implement and manage the proposed project including staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project, and your organizational experience and past history in performing tasks similar to the proposed project. Also include a paragraph describing qualifications of each of the key personnel conducting the project. If you send resumes for the key personnel conducting the project, please keep them to a maximum of three, one-page resumes. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.3 (Overall Qualifications of Applicants).

(v) Partnership Letters of Commitment: If the applicant organization has partners, such as school divisions, state agencies, or other organizations, include letters of commitment

from partners explaining their role in and/or funding of the proposed project. Do not include letters of endorsement from previous participants, teachers, or others not directly involved in project implementation except letters demonstrating school or school division support and/or direct tie to part of a larger state or regional capacity building effort. Letters should be received as part of application submission. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.3 (Overall Qualifications of Applicants).

(vi) Results from prior NOAA support: If any principal investigator (PI) or co-PI identified on the project has received support from NOAA in the past five years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information should be provided:

* The NOAA award number, amount and period of support;

* The title of the project;

* Summary of the results of the completed work (including # of teachers/students);

* If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on January 14, 2015 when submitting through Grants.gov. PLEASE NOTE: When submitting through Grants.gov, you will receive two emails. An initial email will be sent to confirm your attempt to submit a proposal. This is NOT a confirmation of acceptance of your application. It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application and send you a second email confirming successful submission. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission, hard copy applications will be accepted. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery, and must be received (not postmarked) by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on January 14, 2015.

Informational webinars will be held on November 5, 2014 at 10:00 AM Eastern Time and November 10, 2014 at 2:00 PM Eastern Time. To register for these webinars, please

visit http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet/b-wet-grant-workshops.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Cost Rates

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if your organization has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award. Applicants may also direct cost all allowable project charges. Proposals to this competition that limit indirect costs to no more than 25% of direct costs will likely score higher on evaluation criterion.

2. Allowable Costs

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are determined by reference to relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements. Please note that by December 26, 2014, DOC anticipates adopting the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Requirements), which is codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The OMB Uniform Guidance supersedes and streamlines requirements from previous OMB circulars, including OMB Circulars A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations"; A-21, "Cost Principles for Education Institutions"; and A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments." Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable."

F. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times above to help ensure your application is received on time.

Additional information about Grants.gov submissions:

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically through http://www.grants.gov (Grants.gov).

You may access the electronic grant application for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education & Training Program (B-WET) at Grants.gov and users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site as well as the hours of operation. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

- To use Grants.gov, applicants must obtain a DUNS number and register with the System for Award Management (SAM). This process can take up to seven business days.

- After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number.

- NOAA may request that you provide original signatures on forms at a later date.

If an applicant does not have Internet access or if Grants.gov has technical issues that prohibit submission, hard copy applications will be accepted. Hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery and must be received (not

postmarked) by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on January 14, 2015. Hard copies should be addressed to: Kevin Schabow; NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office; 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 207; Annapolis, Maryland 21403. Facsimile transmissions and e-mail submission of proposals will not be accepted.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (15 points)

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For the B-WET Program this may include the following questions: Does the applicant demonstrate a need for the project? Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the target community? Does the effort align with state, regional, or national environmental education initiatives? What is the likelihood that the proposed activities will increase student, teacher, and/or participant stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay watershed? Does the project address any of the additional NOAA areas of special interest specified in section I. B.? Does the project specify how it supports the Chesapeake Bay Program Environmental Literacy Goal and the NOAA Education Strategic Plan?

2. Technical merit (50 points)

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the B WET Program this may include the following questions: Is the project hands-on for the students, teachers, and/or participants? Is the project learner-centered and focused on questions, problems, and issues to be investigated through collecting, analyzing and sharing data; learning protocols; exploring models; and examining natural phenomena? Is student programming part of a sustained activity that includes defining an issue, outdoor field experiences, action projects, and making conclusions? Does teacher professional development total 24 cumulative hours in duration and include on-going support for teachers? Does the project include active teacher support and fully integrate into what is occurring in the formal classroom? Does the project have a local context that uses the surrounding community as the primary resource for student MWEEs? Does the applicant utilize NOAA staff, products, or services in the delivery of this project? Are the objectives defined in the proposal focused on the stated outcome(s)? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives can be reached within the proposed project period? Does the logic model show good understanding of desired outputs and outcomes for the project? Does the applicant provide an effective evaluation strategy to determine if project objectives and

outcomes are being met? If the applicant is addressing an additional NOAA areas of interest, to what extent is this incorporated into the program?

For Systemic MWEE Implementation projects only: To what degree is the project part of systemic effort that attempts to reach all students and/or teachers at one or more grade levels in an entire school division?

For MWEE Capacity Building proposals scoring criteria will focus on whether or not the project advances the objectives as outlined in the questions above and will specifically ask: Will the proposed work increase the quantity and/or enhance the quality of Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences? Will the scope of work lead to broader MWEE implementation (greater than an individual school district or division)?

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10 points)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For the B-WET Program this may include the following questions: Has the applicant previously worked with target audience? Does the applicant document past collaborations with in depth understanding of schools or school systems? Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Does the proposal include partnerships (not just sub-contracting or financing of project)? Are the partnerships working relationships with all entities meaningfully contributing to the project? Are there letters of support from all partners necessary to carry out the project? Does the applicant partner with a school division or school system, individual schools, or teachers?

For Systemic MWEE Implementation proposals: if the application is not directly from a school division, does the applicant demonstrate experience working with school divisions? Is there sufficient documentation that the school division supports this project? Is there a support letter from school division administration?

For MWEE Capacity Building proposals: Does the proposal include documentation that the proposed work directly supports a state or regional priority?

4. Project costs (20 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the B-WET Program this may include the following questions: Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request? Is the budget request reasonable for the number of students, teachers, and/or participants being reached and represent a good return on investment? Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to bringing students and/or teachers in contact with the environment? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in

the implementation of the proposed project? Does the budget adequately detail the amount of time each individual will spend on the project; is this a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project? Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to leverage other resources? Is the nature of the cost share cash or in-kind; if it is in-kind are all contributions reflected accurately? Does the applicant demonstrate that the project is sustainable after NOAA funding? Is the proposed budget suitable to the geographic area?

5. Outreach and education (5 points)

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the B-WET Program this may include the following question: Does the project involve significant external sharing and communication?

B. Review and Selection Process

Upon receipt of a completed application by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application, including a review to verify that:

- The applicant is eligible to apply;

- The application was received on time;

- All required elements of the application are present and follow format guidance;

- The requested budget is no more than $150,000 annually for Systemic MWEE and Emerging projects, and $75,000 for MWEE Capacity Building projects.

All applications that meet the eligibility and minimum requirements will be evaluated by at least three panel reviewers on a 100 point scale according to the five standard NOAA criteria described in this announcement. Up to four separate review panels may be held depending on the number, geography, and type of applications received. Reviewers may be Federal or non-Federal experts, each having expertise in the subject matter and/or geography of the applications under review. The individual review ratings shall be averaged for each application to establish rank order. Scores from separate panels will not be combined to establish an overall rank order. No consensus advice will be given by the review panels.

C. Selection Factors

TThe B-WET Chesapeake Coordinator may, in consultation with NCBO staff, review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel and make recommendations to the Selecting Official. The average rank order from the review panel will be the primary consideration for the Selection Official in deciding which of the new proposals will be recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. However, the Selecting Official will select proposals after considering the recommendations of the review panel, and recommendations of the B-WET Chesapeake Coordinator. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon the following factors:

1. Availability of funding

2. Balance/distribution of funds

- Geographically
- By type of institutions
- By type of partners
- By research areas
- By project types

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies

4. Program priorities and areas of interest as set out in section I. B of this FFO.

5. Applicant's prior award performance

6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups

7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Projects considered for continuation will be evaluated by the Director of the NCBO, in consultation with the B-WET Chesapeake Coordinator and other NCBO staff, to determine

whether to be continued for funding. If there has been satisfactory prior award performance, projects considered for continuation may take priority over new proposals.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the three months following the date given in this announcement that the full proposals are due to NCBO and preliminary notification will occur in April 2015. No date prior to July 1, 2015 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notifications will be issued via email to the Authorizing Official of the project. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation and the applications will be kept on file in the Program Office in accordance with the DOC's records management requirements.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. Parts 25 and 170 (2010). For more information, these two parts may be downloaded at:,

http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part25.pdf

and

http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part170.pdf

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION: Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634). A copy of the notice may be obtained at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/search.html.

2. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY: In no event will NOAA or the DOC be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

3. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf , and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

4. PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT: This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF−LLL and CD−346 has been approved by the

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the respective control numbers 0348–0043, 0348–0044, 0348–0040, 0348–0046, and 0605–0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

6. EXECUTIVE ORDER 12866: This notice has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

7. NOAA's DATA SHARING POLICY: Environmental data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than 2 years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) must be made publically available at the time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with published data. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decision. If your proposed activities do not generate any environmental data, your application is still required to have a data sharing plan. Such a data sharing plan could include the statement that "this project will not generate any environmental data". More information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental data Management Committee website at: http://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

8. DELINQENT TAX LIABILITY: In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the applicant has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

9. UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS EFFECTIVE DATE: Please note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (OMB Uniform Guidance) found at https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards, which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A 122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A 110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Once adopted, the OMB Uniform Guidance will supersede DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. The DOC expects to adopt the OMB Uniform Guidance by December 26, 2014, meaning that the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to all new awards and to additional funding to existing awards made after December 26, 2014. In addition, the

audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, applicants should familiarize themselves with the OMB Uniform Guidance. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at https://cfo.gov/cofar/.

C. Reporting

1. Financial Reports

All financial reports shall be submitted through the NOAA Grants On-Line system (https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov). Information about federal financial reports is available at:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/grantsonline/Documents/Grantees/Manuals/FederalFinancialReports.pdf

2. Performance Reports

Electronic submission of performance reports is required through the NOAA Grants On Line system, https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov. Semi-annual report must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. "The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over $25,000.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the B-WET Chesapeake website for further information at:
http://chesapeakebay.noaa.gov/bay-watershed-education-and-training-b-wet/bay-watershed-

education-and-training-b-wet, or contact Kevin Schabow, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office; 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 207, Annapolis, MD 21403, or by phone at 410-295-3145, or fax to 410-267-5666, or via internet at Kevin.Schabow@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this FFO may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.